



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

BERTRAND DE BAR-SUR-AUBE AND *AYMERI*
DE NARBONNE

In 1903 (*Romania*, XXXII, 353-56) Suchier showed that Scholastica, daughter of Henry II of Champagne, having married Guillaume V of Vienne, Count of Mâcon, it is more than probable that Bertrand de Bar-sur-Aube wrote the chanson *Girart de Vienne* for Guillaume and Scholastica, in view of the fact that the counts of Vienne boasted of having the epic hero for their ancestor. The marriage is supposed to have been concluded about 1190; Guillaume having died in 1224, it follows that *Girart de Vienne* was composed during the period 1190 to 1224.

As for the chanson *Aymeri de Narbonne*, Louis Demaison, in the introduction to his critical edition of the poem, shows that it was composed between 1205 and 1225 (pp. 81, 89-91). Demaison and Suchier are both of the opinion that *Girart de Vienne* is anterior to *Aymeri de Narbonne* (Demaison, pp. 73-77; Suchier, introduction to *Les Narbonnais*, 1898, p. 54). Demaison thinks that neither of the two poems can lay claim to originality, but that Bertrand has used two older poems, enriching their action by numerous episodes drawn from his own imagination; that, in other words, both the extant poems are only *rifacimenti* of lost originals (pp. 92-97). The messengers sent to Pavia, their adventures during their stay in the capital, their fight against the Germans, the taking of Narbonne by the Saracens and its final conquest by the French, all this seems to have been brought in by Bertrand.

It will be seen very soon that the Savari episode, in which a hateful rôle is given the Germans and which has repeatedly attracted the attention of the critics, allows a greater precision in dating the chanson.

Some details of the episode in question are necessary; I quote from the edition of *Aymeri de Narbonne* by Louis Demaison (Société des anciens textes français, Paris, 1887).

On their trip to Italy, to the court of the Lombard King Boniface, the ambassadors of Aymeri, among whom knights like Girart de Roussillon, Hugo and Gui are especially to be noted, soon after
151]

passing the Alps meet with a squadron of three hundred German knights. Their leader, Savari, addresses the French band in the most insolent manner, asking them the purpose of their expedition (vss. 1609-46):

Vont s'en li mes sanz nule demorée . . .
 Chevauchant vont a grant esperonnée,
 Tant qu'il costoient .I. brueil, lez une prée . . .
 A tant encontrent a senestre, a l'entrée,
 I. Alemant de molt grant renommée,
 Viellarz estoit, s'ot la barbe mellée;
 C'ert Savaris qui grant gent a menée:
 III^e estoient, chascuns la teste armée,
 Des Alemanz des mieuz de sa contrée.
 Vestu estoient comme gent mal senée:
 Chascuns avoit une gonele lée
 Et une jupe de gros agniex forrée,
 Solers a ganches et chaucés havetées,
 Aumuce el chief et par devant orlée.
 Si ot chascuns ceinte molt longue espée,
 Une toise ot, s'ele fust mesurée,
 Et targe avoit roonde au col posée.
 Et si chevauchent comme gent forsenée:
 Tel i ot ive a queue recopée
 Ou haut cheval a grant teste levée.
 Et qant il ont nostre gent avisée,
 En haut s'escrîent comme gent desfaée
 "Godehelspe!" a molt grant alenée.
 Mes Savaris qui ot la barbe lée,
 Parla romanz, que la terre ot usée;
 Contre noz contes s'en vet de randonée;
 Qant pres d'eus fu, s'a sa voiz escriée:
 "Ou iroiz vos, fole gent esgarée?
 "Qui est vos sire et de quele contrée?
 "Normanz senblez, c'est verité provée,
 "Qui tel orgueil menez et tel ponée.
 "Ainz que voiez de Pavie l'entrée,
 "Sera molt chier cele robe achetée;
 "N'en enmenroiz vaillant une denrée!"

Girart de Roussillon informs Savari of the object of their expedition. Savari maintains, in the same arrogant tone, that he has been promised the hand of Hermengart and that he will never allow the

French to proceed on their journey. Count Gui, angry at this insolence, tells his countrymen to get ready for battle; the Germans prepare on their part and attack the French in a vigorous assault, shouting their battle cry "Godeherre." Savari does not show himself especially eager for the honor of fighting in the first rank. He keeps his own person in the background, leaving his people to fight for him. Only once he feels enough courage to attack Hugo from behind, wounding him slightly with his spear; but when Hugo turns his horse, he flees before his opponent can attack him. The battle goes on, Savari's nephew, Goniôt, kills Aymeri de Losengne, but is mortally wounded by Girart de Roussillon, whereupon the latter kills another German, called Hugo. A second assault of the Germans, who are still by far superior in numbers, is equally unsuccessful. A German, called Gracien, wounds Girart de Roussillon from behind, throwing him from his horse. For this treachery he is justly punished by Gui, who kills him. Savari flees with the few knights who survive, hoping to have his revenge later and trusting in the assistance of his brother, Bishop Morant of Verciaus (Vercil, Piedmont) (vss. 1666-1940). I quote the passage showing Savari's cowardice (vss. 1932-40):

Qant Savaris voit cel encombrement,
A l'einz qu'il pot, s'en est tornez fuiant.
Dist a ses homes: "N'alez plus atendant!
"Ce sont deable, par le mien esciënt!
"Se a Verciaus estions ça devant,
"Lors avrions et secors et garant:
"Mes freres est li evesques Morant;
"Vengera nos de ceste male gent,
"Qui ça derrier nos chacent"

The poet asserts that Savari was the first to flee, far ahead of his men and so precipitately that there was no hope for the pursuing Frenchmen to reach him. He continues his flight to Verciaus, yet the townspeople refuse to open the gate to him; they even throw stones on the heads of his knights. Nay, he has to undergo a still greater humiliation: a Lombard (that is, a coward, the Lombards being generally considered as cowards during the middle ages) wounds him and throws him from his horse (vss. 1941-75). The French ambassadors continue their journey to Pavia.

Savari, however, does not forget his shameful defeat. He is waiting in ambush for the French to pass by on their trip home. Hugo, foreseeing the danger, persuades his comrades to descend from their mules and to mount their steeds. Savari incites his vassals to take revenge for the defeat inflicted upon them, while Hugo cheers on his little squadron against the coward Savari (vss. 1952-2792). The latter summons the French to surrender (vss. 2798-2803):

Randez vos tost, fiz a putain, gloton!
 Ne vos vadroit la desfanse .I. bouton.
 En Alemengne vos menrai en prison;
 A mon talant en prendrai venjoison,
 Et si me plest, s'en avrai raençon!

The battle begins. A hundred new men come to help Savari, shouting "Godehelpe" in a loud voice, and kill Hugo's horse. The little band of French knights is suffering greatly from the superiority in numbers of the enemy. They take refuge in a nearby tower. While Hugo sets out for Narbonne to inform Aymeri of what has happened, the knights in the tower are well received by the owner, a "vavassal." The Germans lay siege to the tower. Hugo brings the news to Aymeri who heads a rescue. Noticing the approach of Aymeri's army, Savari's cowardice reveals itself again in a decision to flee. But Hugo, foreseeing this, prevents the flight of the enemy. Savari is terror-stricken; he drops from his horse, imploring his enemy to spare his life, and is taken prisoner. The rest of the Germans flee in all directions; some of them are killed, some escape. Hugo delivers Savari up to the owner of the tower, that he might get a large ransom and thus be rewarded for his good services. (vss. 2802-3236.)

As can be seen from the résumé given and the passages quoted, Savari and his German knights are depicted in the worst light: their arrogance toward people whom they suppose to be weaker than themselves, their cowardice and their having resort to treachery was surely meant by the poet to have some effect on his hearers or readers. This rôle given to the Germans is the more striking since it is unique in the literature of the *Chansons de Geste*. For *Gui d'Allemagne*, in the *Couronnement de Louis*, is little more than a figure-head; the same can be said of the emperor in *Bæve de Hamstone*. The rôle of

the Saxons cannot be considered, because the religious motif comes into play, the Saxons being pagans like the Saracens. Why then did Bertrand de Bar ascribe this rôle to the Germans? It is likely that a satisfactory solution of the problem can be found in the political circumstances of the poet's time.

Thibaut III, Count of Champagne, died May 24, 1201, in the midst of active preparations for his participation in the Fourth Crusade, leaving his wife, Blanche of Navarre, regent for his posthumous son, Thibaut IV, later the famous Thibaut le Chansonnier. From the first day of her widowhood Blanche had to defend herself against the attacks and intrigues of numerous enemies, who tried to deprive her and her child of their fief. The most dangerous of them all was no doubt Erard de Brienne, husband of Philippina, daughter of Henry II, Count of Champagne. Philippina was a pretender to the dignity of countess of that fief, while Henry II was a most powerful enemy because of his connections with several grandees of Burgundy and, above all, with Thibaut I, Duke of Lorraine, and his German vassals. Blanche succeeded in holding her own, thanks to her wise policy of securing the aid of Philip Augustus, King of France, which she obtained, not without making numerous concessions and sacrifices. In doing so, she had acted very wisely, foreseeing perhaps the great development which royalty was to take in the course of the 13th century. So she took without hesitation the part of the French King in his struggle with the German Emperor Otto IV. The decisive part taken by the nobility of Champagne on the battlefield of Bouvines is well known. They formed the right wing of the French position, and the destruction of the host of the Count of Flanders was due to their vigorous assault under the leadership of men like Hugues de Mareuil, who took prisoner Ferrand of Flanders, the Count of Saint-Pol, and Count Henry of Bar-le-Duc. With so much at stake in this struggle and with the actual spectacle of a German invading army before the people, it would be but natural that feeling in Champagne should run very high and that sentiments of hatred and antipathy against the Germans should be uttered. However we are not left to rely on this supposition alone. D'Arbois de Jubainville, in his *Histoire des Ducs et Comtes de Champagne*, II, pp. 17-18, mentions two registers of the chancery of Champagne,

testifying the joy of Blanche when she heard of the defeat suffered by Otto IV: she gave a fief as a reward to the messenger who brought the good news. D'Arbois de Jubainville gives the text of one of them:

Manesiers de Cosances, escuier mi sires li rois, hom liges a Madame la contesse de sa meson fort o tot le porpris et de L arpanz de terre que Madame la contesse li donna a essarter, quant il aporta les lettres de la victoire mi sires li rois, que les contes de Flandres, de Bouloigne et de Salebere estoient pris.

The most bitter enemy of Blanche, Thibaut I of Lorraine, had fought at Bouvines among the troops of Otto IV. Having escaped from the disaster, he continued to help Erard de Brienne in a sort of guerilla warfare which the latter adopted against Blanche, a war which was brought to an end by the interference of Pope Honorius III, who excommunicated Erard and his adherents, and of Frederick II, who took prisoner the Duke of Lorraine in 1218. It is very likely that those events did nothing to increase the little esteem in which the Germans were held by the inhabitants of Champagne since the day of Bouvines.

One last point. We have a document dated August 14, 1217, in which Blanche invites Manassès de Rosson and all the inhabitants of Aubepierre to take the oath of fidelity before the bishop of Langres. The place of the meeting was to be Bar-sur-Aube. The last visit paid by Blanche to Bar had been made in 1205, and we possess no document showing that she had taken up her residence in the castle of Bar during the interval, although we cannot complain of a lack of documents for that particular period. If she had not set foot in the old castle since 1205, there is nothing more natural than that her arrival and the whole meeting should have assumed the character of a festival. It is quite probable that on this occasion Bertrand composed the song on the defeats of Savari and his followers, the days of Bouvines and the German invasion of the country serving as a background in the minds of his hearers, many of whom no doubt had seen with their own eyes the clumsy apparel and heard the cry of "Godechelespe" of the hosts of Otto IV.

To summarize what has been said: the chanson *Aymeri de Narbonne*, in its extant form, seems to have been composed under the influence of the battle of Bouvines, won by Philip Augustus and the

knights of Champagne on the 27th of July, 1214. When considering the poem in its structure, its spirit, and the large majority of its episodes, we find that it differs but little from the rest of the *Chansons de Geste*. Its make-up is that of the average Old French epic poem, with a goodly number of battle scenes, duels, sieges, and insolent messages. Its spirit breathes the religious fervor of the crusades, which in a general way considers the European world as one great nation, the people of God, who are fighting against His enemies, the Saracens. The great majority of the episodes are more or less commonplaces with well-known motifs, such as that of the cowardly Lombards, the princess giving way to her passion, etc. But the Savari episode, which occupies altogether a space of 918 verses, that is, about one-fifth of the whole poem, indicates a new spirit. It is for the first time that representatives of two Christian nations are seen to fight a regular *Chanson de Geste* battle. No longer do the German knights gather around the banner of Charlemagne, as auxiliaries of the French, to attack the common enemy of Christendom; no longer do they form an integral part of the great Christian and French army, the embodiment of the mediaeval ideal of a world-theocracy. The Savari episode reveals the existence of two different nations with an independent national spirit, with their characteristics as they appeared to the biassed mind of the French minstrel, but none the less pronounced and based upon actual facts. The French national spirit has been aroused, certainly under the influence of the victory of Bouvines. And it is significant that at the same period Walther von der Vogelweide on the other side of the Rhine expressed the same feelings of national pride. But still a certain local patriotism seems to be a great deal stronger than nationalism, and while in France at large the victory does not seem to have deeply stirred the people, in a corner of Champagne a minstrel puts into the frame of a *Chanson de Geste* all his antipathy against the invaders. It was in all probability the hatred of the population of Champagne for Thibaut I of Lorraine and his German vassals, the enemies of the regent Blanche of Navarre, which inspired the poet. Consequently, *Aymeri de Narbonne* was possibly composed after the battle of Bouvines, probably between July 1214 and 1218, year of the final defeat of Thibaut I of Lorraine, and more precisely, about 1217,

date of the arrival of Blanche at Bar-sur-Aube, at the time of the impending defeat of her enemies.

Girart de Vienne being anterior to *Aymeri de Narbonne*, it would follow that the former of the two poems was composed between 1190 and 1214 (1217).

ALEXANDER HAGGERTY KRAPPE

CHICAGO